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ABSTRACT

The problem of an American Indian not on a tribal roll is that he is not a legal ward of any particular tribe and is therefore ineligible for financial aid for educational purposes. The relocation program has moved Indians from reservations to urgan areas to encourage assimilation, further adding to the identity problem. Urban Indians are pressuring relocation centers for advanced educational opportunities, but resources are limited for higher education. Often Indian students are not provided with enough funds to complete a program they are encouraged to begin. Little information is available on the problems of urban Indians. Existing organizations such as the National Indian Youth Council should be contracted with to research Indian problems in all urban areas with large concentrations of Indian people. An Indian organization such as the United Scholarship Service should be contracted with to conduct an investigation of existing educational programs for Indian students to result in compilation and dissemination of information about opportunities for higher education. (JH)

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"EDUCATION OF URBAN, UNENROLLED, AND MOBILE INDIANS"

A POSITION PAPER

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Submitted By

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to

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"EDUCATION OF URBAN, UNENROLLED, AND MOBILE INDIANS."

A. THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM.

The nature of the problem of an unenrolled American Indian lays in the fact that he is not a legal ward of any particular tribe. This results from one of two things: First, he may be born off of the reservation while a majority of the treaties state that one must be born on the reservation for enrollment status. Second, the tribe may have terminated the rolls. This results from either tribal action or directives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There are presently no known alternatives for proving Indian blood with a particular tribe except when one goes through the process of securing enrollment papers for your parents.

This exception may prove fruitless when one is in the process of submitting an application for educational money. He may spend too much time in the process of securing information to prove Indian blood and lose his chance at securing this grant. Also involved is the chance that this particular Indian may live hundreds of miles off of the reservation because of his parents employment. When one is dealing with the tribe or Bureau of Indian Affairs under these circumstances it is quite easy for these people selecting candidates to exclude him. The fear that he may return to the reservation for a confrontation is not to be taken seriously. He does not have the time nor the money to be traveling hundreds of miles back and forth fighting for his legal right to this scholarship money. The end result is that he is left out of any chance of financial aid from his tribe or the

Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Also one must understand that tribal politics play major roles in determining grantees. One must have a relative on the tribal council or a good friend within the department of the Bureau of Indian Affairs that selects candidates for grants. I know of one such case where an unenrolled Indian lived on another reservation in another state but his father was a personal friend of the agency superintendent of his parents reservation and also an old friend of Bob Bennett, then Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He had no problem in securing federal aid for college. As a matter of fact, one generally receives aid for four years. He received aid for five years because of this relationship. I consider this a misappropriation of funds.

Another instance of an Anglo student who could only prove that his grandmother was ½ Cherokee. He had no problem getting money even though he lived in Oklahoma but not on Indian land.

There is no doubt in my mind that corruption in the selection of candidates does exist within the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The guidelines that have been established are not adequate or effective for urban Indian students.

The scope of the problem seems to be wide spread. Particularly when one is a second generation Indian born off of the reservation because of his parents relocating for employment, or his father may be a member of the armed services, etc. One cannot make a trip back to the reservation everytime an expectant child is due. He thus loses his elgibility for enrollment. Generally, Bureau of Indian Affairs offices located on reservations other then his

own seldom respond to an application for a grant submitted by an Indian from another reservation outside there jurisdiction. The general excuse here is that reservation Indians have priority over those not living on the reservation regardless of enrollment status. Without inside help one may as well forget the application.

I have traveled extensively throughout the United States and visited both rural tribes and urban Indian centers. I have also visited college campuses which have a combination of both urban and tribal affiliated Indian students. The same stories are always related to me. The same desolate situation still exists and envy by those urban students for the lucky BIA student who has money for a college education.

Discussion involving the current status of research on the problems and indicate what is already known about unenrolled Indians will be discussed briefly due to the lack of research being conducted on this subject.

B. DISCUSS THE CURRENT STATUS OF RESEARCH ON THE PROBLEM AND INDICATE WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN.

Relatively little is known about the urban Indian situation much less the educational aspect. There are presently on going studies at UCLA, University of Colorado, University of Minnesota and some research has been conducted by the United Scholarship Service regarding urban Indian communities.

There have been numerous studies done for the tribal related student and many statistics have been compiled. However, they do not provide accurate statistics regarding Indian education at the college level. Still, one thing is for sure, the tribal affiliated student is provided with the best financial resources available for advanced education.

The urban Indian student is drastically left out of the scene. Many of the inquiries I have made during my travels with people involved with Indian education do not know of any studies going on in urban areas with the exception of the regular poverty research that is being conducted. Urban Indian education is almost a total blank. They can only guess at the problems. Many of those Indian students who succeed on their own are working for private industry and are never heard of again unless they become involved in Indian affairs.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs may be blamed for this situation. It was their policy to relocate Indians off of reservations in hope that they might assimilate thus reducing their liability to Indian people. The relocating of Indians was established into a program now known as the "relocation program" Its two objectives

were to place Indians on the job or enter them into trade schools. This accomplished their assimilation tactic, although it is not working out as at first thought. Urban Indians are pressuring BIA relocation centers for better educational opportunities.

Consider Los Angeles, California, with an Indian population of approximately 50,000. Most of these young Indian students are second generation Indians. Since the national trend advocates higher education these students are also seeking higher educations. However, their resources are limited. They are in competition for scholarships which are handed out only tokeningly to Indian students.

Statistics regarding relocation at present do not reflect a true picture of what is happening. These people are not motivated generally for a higher education because of a lack of financial aid. Their position bars them from BIA and tribal monies. It is for this reason of severing tribal ties by relocation that I do not believe the program to be a great success. Many of these people are left to die in cities. The suicide rate and those jailed weekly for drunkeness would justify this accusation.

C. SPECIFY WHAT KNOWLEDGE STILL NEEDS TO BE GATHERED, WHY IT IS NEEDED, AND HOW ITS USE CAN LEAD TO A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

Facts regarding any research on this subject are not available. However, the amount of knowledge available is enormous and should be documented for later references for solutions to the problem.

Some of the knowledge that should be gathered should be;

1. Find out the true motive of the relocation program.

2. What kind of legal relationship exists for thos selecting relocation between the tribe and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Does the Indian still have the opportunity to seek financial aid for a higher education from the tribe or BIA?

3. If he does not have the opportunity to solicite funds from these two agencies what other alternatives does he have?

4. What problems does he encounter in trying to adjust to an institution of higher learning?

5. What are his ideas for changing the type of relationship that exists between him and the BIA relocation center, so that it might effectively respond to him and his motivation for a higher education.

6. There are presently on going projects such as work study, Indian studies programs, etc. that have initiated programs for Indian students. The problems that exist for the students might be analyzed to correct problems such as entrance requirements, English, math, etc.

These are only a few recommended subjects. There is much more that needs to be gathered to justify the kind of effective

help the BIA or tribe needs in order to respond.

Existing Indian organizations such as the National Indian Youth Council would be most effective in carrying out this research. The very basis of its existence justifies this action. It is youth oriented and has contacts on both the urban and rural Indian level. These contacts are also national in scope.

The National Indian Youth Council also has contacts at the university level. They are presently effectively involved with Indian studies programs on various campuses throughout the United States. They have dealt effectively with university administrators. I think that this knowledge and skill needs to be put to work. Only Indians can identify their problems and will only truthfully relate this situation to other Indian people. We do not need any more non-Indian do gooders. We have defined self-determination. Now it can only work two ways. It can either destroy us or let us determine our own destinies.

The only solution that will have effective results for urban Indians will be to investigate the problems, analyze the problems for solutions and then a direct confrontation between BIA personnel and tribal affiliations. Once this confrontation has a meeting of the minds and indifferences settled a feasible plan could be adopted to insure the proper educational goals of urban Indians.

I do not think that this situation has been taken seriously by anyone, except urban Indians. I think that Alcatraz is a good indication of that. The lack of research studies and current statistics for urban Indians is not sufficient enough to know

if these people are secure or not. I am sure that most relocation centers are aware of the problems for they must confront this situation daily.

I do not feel that further knowledge amassed over a period of years is going to rescue the present problem. Most urban Indians are asking for a solution to the problem now. They are tired of waiting.

There is enough knowledge available and now needs to be documented on a national scale. We have the Indian expertise and institutions available. We now need to put them to work.

MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING NEEDED RESEARCH EMPHASIS.

The recommendations that I give are those that I have developed after considerable talks with many Indian people placed in this environment. They are the only people that can offer constructive recommendations for it is their destinies that are at stake.

1. An existing Indian organization such as the National Indian Youth Council should be contracted with to carry out the necessary research regarding the urban Indian problems. This should involved all urban areas where a concentration of Indian people justifies such an investigation. It should be coordinated by those people in conjunction with the nearest university where an Indian studies program is on going.

2. Once the investigation is complete, it should be evaulated by pre-selected groups from the urban area with constructive suggestions in mind, through the university and then finally a confrontation between the tribes represented in the urban area and BIA personnel only as a resource people. A projected problem would be to have several young urban Indian students submit applications to tribal and BIA educational programs and followed up by investigative work. The applications once rejected should be analyzed to find out the exact reason why it was rejected. This reason could be used as a weapon in seeking solutions to the problem. It might mean an appropriation increasing the BIA scholarship budget but once proven a necessity, this could be accomplished through the proper channels.

3. Many of the young relocated students that are studying

dental technology, etc, that require advanced study are not provided with enough funds for completion of the program. They should be granted full scholarships to complete their program of study. However, in most cases these people are left with only a partial education in their field of study. During my tenure on relocation I encountered many people placed in this situation. The end result, working an an inadequate salary, return to the reservation and eventually drinking. A possible solution to this problem would be to set up a scholarship board in all urban areas composed of both urban Indians and BIA personnel. The financial needs could be decided on for these students wishing to continue their education. The board could see that this is accomplished.

4. Once the problems have been established, the investigation evaulated and the proper authorites notified with solutions, work could begin to solve the goals. Advisory boards or scholarship boards (what ever they decide on) could be established to see that these solutions are carried out.

5. There are presently existing programs such as work study, high potential programs such as at UCLA where 50 slots are open for Indian students with another 50 openings planned for next fall. These programs are not publicized to the extent of reaching the Indian student. An alternative here would be to contract with an Indian organization such as the United Scholarship Service who could conduct an investigation into the existing programs throughout the country available for Indian students. Once the investigation is complete a booklet such as the one published by the BIA and seen once in awhile could be published in bulk volume and distributed nationally.

I am sure that there are other recommendations needed for further justification but with the confidence of those I contacted it was felt that these were the most prominent and that other arrangements could be worked out if a project of this nature were to be undertaken by Indian organizations.